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**LETHE Rehears'd :**

O R, A

**Critical DISCUSSION**

O F T H E

*Beauties and Blemishes* of that Performance,

Interspersed with

Occasional Remarks upon DRAMATICK  
SATIRES in general, as well as on some  
that have been *best received* in particular.

The Whole in a *free Conversation* amongst fe-  
veral *Persons of Distinction*.



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L O N D O N :

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*Warwick Lane.* 1749,

## INTERLOCUTORS.

### M E N.

*Sir Francis Friendly*, a very worthy, sensible, and learned Gentleman.

*Dr. Heartfree*, a very candid and judicious Person, who has a great Opinion of *Mr. Garrick*.

*Mr. Snipsnap*, a vociferous modern Critick.

### W O M E N.

*Lady Friendly*, a good-natur'd Woman, with a very sound Understanding.

*Melissa*, her Niece, inclined to be a very fine Lady.



## LETHE Rehears'd.

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*A Back Parlour in Russel-street,  
Covent-Garden.*

Sir FRANCIS FRIENDLY, Dr. HEARTFREE,  
and Mr. SNIPSNAP.

*Sir FRANCIS FRIENDLY.*



ENTLEMEN, I am very glad to see you.——You were at the Play last Night——I carried my Wife and my Niece thither.——We are strangely divided in our Opinions, about the new Entertainment.——You'll oblige me much, by giving me yours.

*Dr. Heartfree.* Why really, *Sir Francis*, I shall give you mine very freely. I think, if honest *David* could, as a Poet, have contrived to get a large Quantity of the Waters o *Lethe* behind the Scenes, he had best have

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brought

brought it out ; and as a Manager, prevailed upon the *Audience* to have drank each a Cup of it to prevent future Prejudices.—There was a Time when I admired him. But, with me, I must confess, the *Poet* has done the Business both of the *Player* and of the *Patentee*.

*Sir Fran. Friendly.* Your Sentiments, *Doctor*, upon the Point in Question.

*Dr. Heartfree.* Just the Reverse of my Friend here. I always liked the Man, because I thought he had Merit, and now I am so much pleased with him as an *Author*, that I am sure he will for the future, give me double Pleasure as an *Actor*. His Piece seems to be a Copy of one of *Lucian's* Dialogues ; and as from the Action it moves us more, methinks it ought not to charm us less. Instruction, is the Business of the Stage, and therefore in minding that he minds his own Business, and at the same Time puts us on minding ours.

*Mr. Snipnap.* Ha ! ha ! ha ! The first Time that ever I knew Business and the Play-House brought together ; why now I thought we went there to forget Business, and to Church to hear Sermons ? Then, for *Lucian*, I'll be hanged if he knows any more of him than I do. WALSH's *Hospital for Fools*, and Sir JOHN VANBRUGH's *Æsop*, furnished the Materials, DODSLEY's *Toy-Shop*



*Shop* was the Original, and this but a Copy. For my Part, I looked upon a *Dramatick Satire*, to be in Effect a *Libel* upon the *Stage*—The Inspector would have interposed, if the Author's Abuse had not fallen upon the *Nation*.

*Sir F. Friendly.* Indeed, Mr. *Snipsnap*, you are too hard upon poor *David*. Let him have come by it how he would, the Fable appears to me very easy and natural. I dare say, there is not a fine Gentleman in the Kingdom, who at the Age of Forty, would not drink a Gallon of the Waters of *Lethe* to forget, rather than a Bottle of *Champagne* to the Remembrance of his past Life ; the Thought therefore was natural enough.

*Mr. Snipsnap.* Not in Respect to the Ladies sure, for I never knew an old Woman in my Life, that did not delight in thinking of, and repeating the Follies of her Youth. The Widow *Evergreen*, over the Way, would not be deprived of the Retrospect of her Amours, upon any Consideration under Heaven, but that of repeating them.—Nor am I quite certain, *Sir Francis*, that you are perfectly right, as to the Men ; there is our old Acquaintance *George Goatish* is never weary of talking of what he has been past acting these thirty Years.

*Dr. Heartfree.* Then he has the more need of the Waters, Mr. *Snipsnap*; and as for Mrs. *Evergreen*, if we had but a Jar of them, I would prevail upon Sir *Francis*, to do what he never did, lay his Commands upon his Lady to engage her to drink Tea here this Afternoon.

*Sir F. Friendly.* Pray, Gentlemen, come a little to Particulars; what think you of the *Poet*?

*Mr. Snipsnap.* Why, his is a *damned* Character upon the very Face of it.

*Dr. Heartfree.* True, Mr. *Snipsnap*; but it is not a *dead* Character for all that.—There are some *Criticks* too now living, that it would prove a great Comfort to the World, if a Bottle of this Water could be as easily provided for them as a Bottle of *Pyrmont*.—It is but a *Fable*, and that's the Misfortune.—What an Advantage would it be to themselves, or at least to Society, if some troublesome People could be but taught to forget!

*Mr. Snipsnap.* Lord, Sir! you are in love with this Fellow to Madnefs. Now to me his *Poet* is his *own* Character, and I think every new Farce he writes, is a Proof that the last is not the *worst* that could be written: His *Lying Valet* was poor, his *Miss in her Teens* Trash, his *Letbe* fetched from *Hell*, and I wish *it* and *him* both at the *Devil*. Why, Sir, you talk of Society; this Fellow's  
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an Enemy to Society, he makes us all a Jest to one another.

*Sir F. Friendly.* There, Mr. *Snipsnap*, you have hit it, that's poor *David's* Crime; he has a Knack of showing People as *they are*, and they can't bear it. *Queen Bess*, when she grew old, would not suffer a Looking-Glass in her Palace; but in the present Age People can't endure *Mirrors* while they are young. But consider, dear Mr. *Snipsnap*, it is the *Monster* makes the *Reflection*, why then would you break the *Glass*?

*Doctor Heartfree.* Look ye, Mr. *Snipsnap*, this same *Poet* is a pert, prating, pretending *Poet*? such a one as you may meet in the *Mall* every Day; he mistakes the wild Flights of a troubled Imagination for fine Strokes of Wit, an impudent Abuse of high Characters for exalted Satire, and would fain hide his own Vices by exposing those of other People.—Do you think *David* was in the Wrong to drag this Fellow out of his Obscurity, and expose him upon the *Stage*? —There cannot be a more laudable Diver-si n than hunting such Vermin.

*Sir Francis Friendly.* Well, but what say you to the *Old Man*? — That is certainly a real Character; old Mr. *Skinflint* that died but t'other Day seems to have sat for it, he who employed his Thoughts in deceiving his Friends *as long as he lived*, and cheated his *Brother* upon his *Death-bed*.

*Mr.*

*Mr. Snipsnap.* Why really that Character is not much amiss. I was thinking that an honest Friend of mine in *Westminster* had sat for it; but now I think of it, he *never* had a *Friend to deceive*; and as for his *Family*, cheating them, perhaps, would have been no *Injustice*. — But by the Way, is there not a little Confusion in it? — The old Fellow does not well know what he would be at. — He does not *remember* what he would *forget*. — Sometimes 'tis that he must die, and anon how he came by his Money.

*Doctor Heartfree.* And can there be any thing more natural? When a Man feels a thousand Stings in his Conscience, and his Body is crazy into the Bargain; is Incoherence a Blunder or a Beauty? Put the Case to Sir *William Lutestring*, which of his Actions he would *forget*, and nothing would puzzle him more, unless it was to find *one* he could consent to *remember*.

*Sir Francis Friendly.* Hold, Gentlemen, you begin to be outrageous. — I find Satire is catching. — Let us proceed to the next Character.

*Mr. Snipsnap.* What, *the fine Gentleman!* — Why I look upon that to be sheer Abuse. — Egad I don't know but a great Part of the Audience had a Right to beat him for it. — Shall a little saucy impertinent Fellow,



low, who lives by the Waste of our Time, presume to ridicule us for the Use we make of it?—'S death, I wish it was a Fashion to go to a City Lecture, I am sure I'd make one, and enable the *Non Cons* to feast while the *Players* starve.——That would raise a Rebellion in his own Theatrical Dominions.

*Dr. Heartfree.* But, my good Friend, is not your Anger raised from a very *different* Cause than *that* which you assign?

*Mr. Snipsnap.* How so, dear Doctor?

*Doctor Heartfree.* Why *David* would not let you *waste* your *Time*.——He would needs make you *improve* it. —— A sad Offence indeed.——And then for the *Lecture*, how could you bear *that*, when you could not bear *his*?——If, indeed, you could find such another Friar *Bungay* as preached a late COURT *Sermon* it might do. ——Such a Preacher would regale all the dull *Debauchees* in Town, and leave the *Stage* to entertain Persons of Taste and Virtue.

*Sir Francis Friendly.* Upon my Word I was of Opinion, that this Character was a little outrageous. —— But my Niece *Melissa* convinced me of the contrary; she told me she was sure it was drawn for my *Ld Strut*; and the very Moment that she mentioned him, I was satisfied the Character was not out of Nature. Lady *Friendly* reckoned  
up

up two or three more; and when my Recollection was once awakened, I must confess I grew in Pain for the Author, lest some of this numerous Fraternity should get him into their Clutches, and exhibit a second Time the *Scene* at the *Lebeck's* Head.

*Mr. Snipsnap.* So then you think it extremely reasonable that the Manners of People of Quality should be ridiculed, their Foibles exposed, and every thing they do censured, by every little Fellow that takes himself to be a Wit. — At this Rate, Sir, what does Birth, Title, Rank, Place, or Seat in either House signify?

*Doctor Heartfree.* Nothing, Sir, if a Man possesses them without Desert. — Such a worthless Fellow *libels* his *Species* and the *Constitution*, and is therefore very justly below the Notice of the Laws, and delivered up to the Contempt of Mankind. — This, Sir, is a *Writ* of *Reprisal* that *Virtue* issues against *Fortune*.

*Mr. Snipsnap.* And so your beloved Author dwindles into a *Catchpole*.

*Sir Francis Friendly.* An Officer of Justice, if you please, who by a proper Authority seizes such as would impose upon the Vulgar for *fine Gentlemen*, and thereby bring into Discredit a Character they never had. But what say you to the next Scene?

*Enter*

*Enter Lady Friendly and Melissa.*

*Melissa.* Good-morrow, *Uncle*; your Servant *Doctor*; Mr. *Snipsnap* your Servant.—Perhaps we interrupt, you were somewhat loud.—*Politicks*, I suppose, or *Philosophy*. O no! upon that Subject People are seldom so much in earnest.

*Lady Friendly.* Shall we withdraw Sir *Francis*?

*Sir F. Friendly.* By no Means, my Dear; we were talking of the *Entertainment* last Night, and were got as far as the Scene of Mrs. *Tatoo* and her *Husband*.

*Melissa.* Upon my Word the only tolerable Part of the Thing. Mrs. *Tatoo* is a Girl of Spirit, and talks very naturally. But instead of a *Drum*, methinks the Author might have afforded the Man a *Pair of Colours*. A giddy Wench, his Helpmate, to be sure, but has some very agreeable Flights, — and then *Matrimony* is so well described.

*Lady Friendly.* True Niece,—such *Matrimony*.—Then methinks you are a little too squeamish about the *Drum*, it's not so long ago that a *Lady* of *Quality* and *Fortune* threw herself away upon a *Valet de Chambre*, and shewed herself afterwards a very Mrs. *Tatoo* in *Fickleness* as well as *Fondness*.—But alas! good Sense and Purity of Manners are the Effects of a strict

Education, and that is now out of Fashion. Girls are left to themselves almost from the Time they go alone, and in consequence of that, are but bigger Girls all their Lives.

*Mr. Snipsnap.* With Submission to your Ladyship, methinks the *Sex* never made a brighter Figure than they do at present. Heretofore it was *all Constraint*, now we see them as they are, and admire them for being what they seem.—Foils and Candle Light are requisite to give Lustre to false Stones, but Brilliants need none of these Contrivances to add to their Beauty.

*Lady Friendly.* Very true, *Mr. Snipsnap*; but even Diamonds receive that Brightness for which they are admired from being polished, which I have been told is a Work of Difficulty, and are besides capable of great Improvements from their Setting. — Your Simile is indeed very pretty and pleasant, but, as you see, not absolutely just. — Even Pebbles, when they fall into the Hands of great Artists, discover such Beauties, as render them little inferior in brightness and in Value to precious Stones.

*Dr. Heartfree.* Spoken like a Woman of Sense, and one who sets a true Value upon her Sex.—*Mrs. Tatoo* is a downright female Savage.—A rough Diamond that sparkles through its flinty Coat, and discovers just so much of its native Lustre, as makes us regret



regret the Want of those Advantages that might have been bestowed upon it.

*Melissa.* For my Share I hate Art. The wildest Prospects give the greatest Pleasure. When People have once learned to disguise their Tempers, we never know what they are till it is too late. That she married the Man was a Proof she liked him; and the Obligation she conferred upon him ought to render him indulgent to her Failings. We are none of us perfect; and methinks there is a laudable Sincerity in not pretending to it. Mr. *Tattoo* gives himself Airs that by no Means become him; but as they are natural and copied from the Life, they shew us what ingrateful Creatures Men are, when Female Frailty has given them Power.

*Sir F. Friendly.* Bless me, Niece, how you talk!—— Can you expect that such Boarding-School Elopements can end otherwise than in Misery?—— Are Girls to think of marrying as soon as they have parted with their Babies?—— Is there any thing in Nature that can shock a well-meaning Mind more than such impertinent Behaviour?—— Don't those forward Girls first shame their Families by imprudent Marriages, next shame their Husbands by their Imprudencies after Marriage, and thereby double the Shame of such as have the

Misfortune to be related to them?—How hapless in this Age is the Lot of Parents!

*Mr. Snipsnap.* Dear Sir *Francis*, you begin to be too serious.—Women, as well as Men, have different Inclinations; and believe me, with all the Education in the World, Madam *Tatoo* would still have had her Follies, tho' perhaps her Follies might have been of a different Kind.—Besides, with all their Follies there is something so bewitching in the Sex, that——

*Lady F.* You can't help being diverted with them for a little while.——When weary with one set of Follies you seek Relief from another, and fancy you are making a Compliment to the Ladies, when you tell us in plain *English*, Nature meant them for your Amusement.——A very noble Purpose truly! and the Women must have very elevated Ideas that can pique themselves upon diverting one Coxcomb after another, and in practising such ridiculous Sallies of Humour as may render them the Subject of Laughter to those who stand in the very same Light to their own Sex, and are only tolerable at such Seasons as Time itself is a Burthen.——But Women whom Nature has not neglected, and whose Talents have been improved, scorn such Praises.

*Melissa.*

*Melissa.* Oh the Blessings of a regular Education ! First the Horn-book, then the Sampler, next the *French* Spelling-book, then Scrawling, then Dancing, then the Spinnet, and so on from one thing to another, till we have learned twenty Accomplishments, which are all knocked on the Head by the Prudish Maxim, *that it is a Crime to use them.* To what End all the Plagues of Learning, if after we have run through them ; it's indecent to read a Novel, its scandalous to write a *Billetdoux*, past bearing to go to a Ball with a Friend ; and downright Impudence not to tell a Man one likes, that we can't bear him ?

*Dr. Heartfree.* Indeed, Madam, the Picture you have drawn is not at all pleasing ; but if you will be pleased to consider, that Giddiness is the readiest Road to Care ; that unseasonable Mirth certainly ends in Sorrow ; that liking at first Sight is no happy Omen for living together without Quarrels ; and that, after all, it is better to take Advice in our Youth, than to collect it from Experience, which is very truly said to be the Mistress of Fools, because Fools only stand in need of her Lectures ; you will find your Reasoning will lead to no just Conclusion.

*Sir*

*Sir F. Friendly.* Pray, Niece, what do you think of Mrs. *Tatoo's* Description of a fine Lady?

*Melissa.* Pretty enough, and not quite wide of the Thing.—She speaks what many only think.

*Sir F. Friendly.* Very well, and do you imagine a fine Lady, at least such a fine Lady, can be amiable in any Eyes but her own?

*Melissa.* Perhaps she may'nt desire it. —But to be sure, Uncle, she will be told she is.

*Sir F. Friendly.* Aye, dear Niece, but for what End, and how long? — That she may be deceived, and not discover it, till she is undone. —Then comes a Time of being serious in spite of her Teeth. —What has she to do then, Niece?

*Melissa.* Why, she may be a fine Lady still, if she had but Sense enough to preserve her Fortune. — She may be tired with their Approbation who cease to approve her, —and find others.

*Lady Friendly.* What! if she has lost her Reputation?—No, *Melissa*, take my Word for it, Hoydens that begin the World madly lead a short Life in Misery, and are sure to die wretched. There is not in Nature so idle and so fantastic a Being as a fine Lady. Her Charms attract many Flatterers, but no Admirers; she may confer Favours, but  
never



never Obligations ; those of her own Stamp will be the first to expose her ; such as are wiser must necessarily laugh at her, and only a few great and beneficent Minds may condescend to pity her, and to wish that her Follies may end in forcing her upon so much Recollection as may serve to make her pity and despise herself.—Such is the Beginning, Progress, and End of a fine Lady, who without a Metaphor, by that Time she arrives at the Noon of Life, would think a Cup of *Lethe* the finest Liquor in the World, provided after she had drank herself, she could recommend it to her Friends.—For Oblivion is certainly preferable to Infamy.

*Mr. Snipsnap.* I am quite tired with moralizing, let us go on. The *French* Marquis is a Character equally new and natural, except that it is to be found in most of *Shadwell's* and *Sedley's* Plays, and that very few *English* Gentlemen are capable of mistaking a Barber for a Man of Quality.

*Dr. Heartfree.* Your Remark would be perfectly decisive, if in spite of so many Cautions as we have received, we did not see such Mistakes made every Day.—Every Body knows, that want of Civility to Strangers, is want of Decency, and what can proceed from nothing but want of Sense. But there is a wide Difference between good Breeding,

Breeding and Affection ; that Respect which is due to a Stranger, and the Caresses that ought to be reserved for the best and dearest of our Friends. Besides, are we ever the better for it ? Has not one of the most illustrious Wits of *France* distinguished us by the glorious Title of *the Nation of Dupes* ? and did not a little trifling Writer t'other Day, raise a Reputation amongst the great Vulgar over all *Europe*, by representing us in a Manner as remote from Truth, as from the Gratitude which ought to have been paid to those Persons of Distinction who had loaded them with Kindnesses ?—After such Instances as these, ought we not to be cautious ? Nay, if this Caution went even to Coldness, who would Foreigners have to thank for it but themselves ?—What say you, Mr. *Snipsnap*, am I not in the right ? and is not the Author in the right too ?

*Mr. Snipsnap.* Undoubtedly ! Grant every *Fact* that you have advanced, and every *Argument* you raise, and all you say is certainly right.—Just so it is with your admired Author, he assumes a *Character*, behaves ridiculously in *that* Character ; and then thinks the *World* must conclude the Character *ridiculous*.—But suppose the World should not be inclined to *admit* either *his* Conclusion or *yours*, what then ?

*Sir F. Friendly.* Dear Mr. *Snipsnap*, instead of new stating, you have shifted the Question. If the Doctor's Facts are Facts, and if the Character *David* has drawn is natural, their Conclusions are just; and it is a hundred to one the World thinks so, unless their Prejudices are very strong indeed, and even that will abate nothing of the Strength of the Doctor's Argument, or the Justice of *David's* Ridicule.—Opinions very often vary, but Things hardly ever change their Natures.

*Melissa.* But, dear Uncle, supposing the Men at Liberty to do what they will, is it necessary that we Women should hate all *Outlandish* Creatures?—Must we run away at the Sight of a *Foreigner*, as Country-Wenches do from *Soldiers*?—Or if a *French* Marquis is inclined to *speake* to one, must we call him *Names* in return for his Civility?—I was taught better than this, Uncle, even at the *Boarding-School*.

*Sir F. Friendly.* By no Means, Niece.—You ought to be *civil* to a *Stranger*, because he is a *Stranger*.—But, methinks, there the Obligation ceases.—*Complaisance* may be sometimes as a great a Fault as *Ill-breeding*. If a *Foreigner* has *Merit*, he will shew it, and *Respect* is due to *Merit* wherever it is found.—But to Grimace, Impertinence,  
D Fiddling,

Fiddling, Contempt of your own Nation, crying up the Manners of his Country, and making *French* Sense the Standard of Rectitude and Politeness, — there is nothing due but *Pity* decently expressed. — Besides a *Stranger* owes it to himself, to have proper Recommendations, without these he cannot expect Admittance into good Company, for if he should, his *Valet de Chambre* dressed in his cast Cloaths, has as good a Title to it as he.

*Melissa*. Oh law ! If this Doctrine should prevail *abroad*, what a fine Time our *travelling* Gentry would have of it ?

*Dr. Heartfree*. I should be very well content, Madam, if that was the Rule. — Treat Foreigners as they treat you, be but as much inclined to see *their* Faults, as they are to see *ours*, and it will justify all that I have advanced. — You have read *French* Authors, and you know how we are treated. You see what an Opinion they have of our Temper, our Understandings, and our Manners. — The *English* say they are gloomy, buried in Speculations, and incapable of Sprightliness or Gaiety.

*Melissa*. And you would have us *despise* and *maltreat* them, in order to shew — that we *are* just what they *take* us to be. — Is it not so Sir ? —

[*Curtesies.*]

Sir



Sir *Francis Friendly*. No, sweet *Niece*, nothing like it, we only argue against adopting *their* Manners, that they may like *ours*.—There is no reason in the Thing.—Manners are the joint Effects of Climate, Education, and Constitution.—These are all natural to every Nation, and it is fit and just they should be so, and therefore to attempt wearing the Manners of *one* Country in another, is unnatural and Affectation. We see and know the bad Effects of this, we suffer by it, and therefore we ought to avoid it. *French* Influence in more serious Matters, arises from our regard to *French* Taste in Trifles; there is no more Reason that we should follow their *Whims*, than that we should be directed by their *Politicks*.—Both are to be shunn'd, if we know our own Interests.

*Lady Friendly*. But seriously, Sir *Francis*, do you think that Complaisance for *French* Modes, can ever prove a step to Slavery?—Methinks that is pushing the Matter too far.—I may like the *Dress* of a Nation very well, without falling in Love with their *Principles*, and change my *Gown* and *Petticoat*—without fear of *changing* my *Religion*.

*Dr. Heartfree*. Very true, Madam. Your Ladyship judges rightly.—But permit me to enquire why the *French* Taste is to give

Law to ours?—Is it because they are *more refined*? why then perhaps their Notions ought to govern us in other Things.—Let us speak the Truth plainly.—Is not the Power of *French Taste* derived from a secret Sense of *Superiority*? and ought we not to search thoroughly, how well this is founded! Dress and Modes are *Trifles* in themselves, but Dress and Modes govern the unthinking Part of a Nation, and how *great a Part* that is I need not tell you, Madam.—One thing I will take the Liberty of saying; when the *House of Austria* was as great as the *House of Bourbon* is now, *Spain* gave the *Mode*, our *Slash-Sleeves* and *Close-Doublets*, and the *Ruffs* and *Fardingals* of your Ladyship's *Grandmother*, came from thence.—Thus you see *Modes* are not quite such insignificant things.—Flags are but painted Silk or Linen, yet where they are display'd, we know who commands within.

*Melissa*. O law! now we are running into *Politicks*.—I can't bear *Politicks* indeed Uncle.

*Mr. Snipsnap*. Nor I neither, Miss.—Proceed we then to Mrs. *Riot*.—That, Doctor, is a wonderful fine Character.—So natural—so just—and so free from Exception.

*Dr. Heartfree*. Truly I think so——It's a Character drawn from Life, and that makes

makes it so much disliked. — Ridicule misapplied is never felt.

*Melissa.* But pray, Doctor, wherein does it differ from Mrs. *Tattoo*.

*Dr. Heartfree.* Mrs. *Tattoo* is, in my Judgment Madam, a *fine Lady* in her *leading-Strings*; whereas Mrs. *Riot* is a *fine Lady full grown*; the former *would* be she cannot tell *what*, the latter is the very *thing* she *would* be and could not tell. Mrs. *Tattoo* is just running wild. Mrs. *Riot* is come to Maturity in Madness. The one fills us with fear of what she may come *to*, and the other is the Picture of *that* of which we are *afraid*—A Woman of Fashion equally *distracted* in her *Notions* and *corrupted* in her *Manners*.

*Lady Friendly.* You are satisfied, Niece, as to the *Difference* of the *Characters*.

*Melissa.* I am satisfied that the Author's a Brute, and makes very bad returns to the Ladies for the Obligations he lies under to them.—Who brought him into Credit? Who made him what he is?—Was it not our running to *Goodman's-Fields*—Crowding the House at *Drury-Lane*, following him to *Covent-Garden*, and crowding even that great House too for his *Benefits*?—But Men will be insolent and ingrateful.

*Lady Friendly.* Very well, Niece. But this Man either had *Merit*, or he had none.—

If

If he had *Merit*, he owes what he is to himself.—If he had *none*, he owed the *Reputation* of it to the *Caprice* of the *Ladies*.—If so, he has *Merit now*, for he has exposed their *Caprices*.

*Dr. Heartfree*. Excellent, Madam, excellent!—The *Logician* in the *Schools* does not argue clofer. I see your *Niece* is convinced, her *Looks* speak it.

*Melissa*. That is more than my *Tongue* shall.—In my Judgment Mrs. *Riot's* is not a *Character* but a *Caracatura*.—In short it is all *Outrage*, *Insolence*, and *Distortion*, a scandalous *Reflection* on the innocent *Liberties* of *Women* in a *superior Sphere*, who enjoy their *Freedom* and take such *Liberties* as keep the *Cares* of *Life* at a *Distance*—If *Women* are naturally *superstitious* or *melancholy*, let 'em fly to *Nunneries*, or, which will do full as well, mope themselves up in some antiquated *Country-House* surrounded with a *Moat* and covered from the bleak *Winds* by a *Rookery*.—*Silence* and *Solitude* may have *Charms*, and let those who like enjoy them.—I confess I'm not of the *Number*.

*Lady Friendly*. Nay, *Niece*, now you are angry, and angry *People* are always in the wrong.—If I were a fine *Lady*, now I should either laugh at you or leave you; but as I never aspired to that *Character*, so I will



will tell you my Sentiments, with the same Freedom you have given us yours.—If in this World there can be any thing called Happiness; Health, Fame, and Fortune must make the principal Ingredients.—Now my Dear, a fine Lady can never enjoy these long.—Late Hours, a continual Flutter of Spirits, and an unceasing Succession of Passions, is incompatible with the first; then Losses at Play, and habitual hearing of double Entendres, and certain unguarded Seasons, may through her frailty deprive her of the second, or, which is almost as bad, draw a general Scandal, which Malice will mistake for Truth.—Want of Oeconomy, multiplied Whims, unforeseen Expences, the Arts of Flatterers, and a hundred other Incidents, will bring down the last, let it be ever so great.—See her then in her last Stage, plunged in the Vapours, vexed with Affronts, and besieged with Duns, what think you then of a *fine Lady*?—Is she the proper Object of Compassion or Contempt?

Sir *Francis Friendly*. Aye, *Niece*, what think you then of a *Cup* of *Lethe* for her?—Would it not be preferable to Imperial Tea or Citron Water?—You hate the Country: but you have been in the Country; and I have observed, that you asked the Name of every Town through which you passed, and how far we had  
to

to go. Why not make the same Enquiries in the *Road of Life*?—Why travel without considering the Journey's End?—Balls, Masquerades, and Assemblies, are, I grant you, very agreeable *Inns*; but if the Passage through them leads to a *lonely Cottage*, or an *Alms-house*, methinks this must damp the Pleasure.

*Melissa*. I grant it, Uncle; but we were talking of People above these Apprehensions.

*Sir F. Friendly*. My dear *Niece*, who are those?—Extravagance in low and high Life is the same.—There is no Fortune that can bear it; if it could, it would not be Extravagance.—Do but recollect the Lords and the Ladies too, that you have known undone.—Call to Mind the Shortness of the Space, and then reflect whether the momentary Happiness of two or three Winters, granting it to be Happiness, can atone for whole Years in Misery?—Consider, that *Mrs. Riot* talks with the Fit upon her; it is the Language of that Madness that leads to this Misery, and leads to it inevitably.—Natural Madness is not a surer Road to *Bedlam*, than this preposterous Passion for Pleasure is to *Penury* and *Penitence*.—Or, which is worse, to *Drinking* or *Distraction*.

*Mr.*

*Mr. Snipsnap.* Don't look so grave, Miss, a fine Lady has a thousand Charms, these Charms will have a thousand Admirers, out of these she may make Choice of one able to maintain her in the Possession of all she desires. It is the Duty of a Husband to comply with the Temper of his Wife; a fine Lady may always command Obedience; and in Consequence of that every thing else.

*L. Friendly.* All which amounts to no more than this, That if a fine Lady does not while single undo herself, she may all in good Time undo her Husband, and through his Fondness make him a Sacrifice to her Folly. Is not that a hopeful Character?—What comfortable Speculations will the former Part of such a Life furnish, in the Silence and Solitude that must conclude it? and how excellently will a few Years of Profusion steel the Heart against all the Anguish and Distress that is to attend the Sequel!—The Remembrance of past Luxury, will make People wondrous easy in a narrow Fortune!

*Melissa.* Well! all I am able to collect, either from the humorous Entertainment, or from the moral Remarks upon it, amounts to no more than this; that the Sight of Pleasure is not more engaging than the Pursuit of it is dangerous. — To live out of the World is to be buried alive, and to live in

the World it seems is a very difficult thing. — For my Part, I take the Decision of such Points to be too difficult for an unexperienced Female Mind; and therefore, tho' I have taken the Liberty of speaking my Thoughts of the fine Lady upon the Stage, yet before I undertake to act the fine Lady in Life, I promise you, I shall take the Advice of my Friends. — But by the Way, there is one Thing I cannot forgive the Author; he makes his fine Lady trip in her Expressions; and tho' we might not expect a fine Lady to speak Sense, yet sure, as an *English* Lady, she might have been allowed to talk *English*. — That Point, I believe, even the Doctor will decide in my Favour. — Mrs. *Riot's* keeping high Company could not prejudice her Language, tho' it might her Morals.

*Dr. Heartfree.* There is so much good *Sense* in your last Declaration, that I would readily *grant* you any thing; but perhaps a little Explanation will make this needless. — You must consider, young Lady, that the Character of Mrs. *Riot* previously supposes *want* of Education. — At least this is a Compliment the Author very judiciously pays to the *better bred* Part of the Sex. — He would give us to understand, that those sort of Flights enter only empty Heads, take Possession of unfurnished Minds, and  
are



are the pure Effects of want of true good Sense happily cultivated.

*Mr. Snipsnap.* Now the duce take you and your Explanations. — You will have this Author a fine Gentleman, a Wit, a Scholar, and the Lord knows what.—He is ever in the right, let him act ever so absurdly; and with the Help of such friendly Excuses, his very Insults become Compliments; and what he meant for downright Abuse, you construe into decent Exhortation.—Instead of Physick, methinks Law should have been your Profession, and the very worst Cause in the World would have prospered in your Hands.—No Client of yours would have been guilty.

*Sir F. Friendly.* In truth, *Mr. Snipsnap*, you have given us a Cast of a very different kind of Oratory; for your very Civility is Abuse, and your Panegyrick Satire concealed. — I do not mean upon my Friend here, but upon poor *David*. — You won't allow him the Benefit of his own Thoughts, the Praise due to the obvious Meaning of his Words, or the common Privilege of being understood in the most favourable Sense. — It is happy for Mankind you were not bred to the Law, for a *Critick* without *Candour*, would in another Station be a *Judge* without *Mercy*. —

Every Man had been a *Criminal* that came before you.

*Melissa*. Let us get to the End of it however; there is but a Scene or two more. — What say you to the Scene of Mr. *Riot*? Is there not something very *coarse* in his Character; and somewhat very *low* in that of his Companion? — Come, Doctor, there is a new Topick for your Eloquence. — Set me right in this Particular, and you shall be the *Director* of my *Taste*, and the Preceptor of my Studies.

*Mr. Snipsnap*. Thank you, dear *Miss*, you are come in seasonably to my Relief; and have fixed upon a Subject that will puzzle this Man of Logic and Learning. — You may rub your Brows, Doctor, but you are fairly caught; nor will all your Wisdom and Wit furnish you with so much as a handsome Excuse for your Favourite's Folly. Come, come, confess that his small Genius deserted him, that he had got to the utmost Extent of his Abilities, and was forced to wrap up his brighter Scenes in this filthy Sheet of brown Paper. — The Actor stumbled in his *Exit*, that's all.

*Dr. Heartfree*. Sir *Francis* I find thought right. — You are not only a Judge without Mercy, but without Patience; the Indictment no sooner read than  
you

you pronounce Judgment, and are for hanging a Man without hearing, for fear he should prove himself innocent.

*Melissa.* But, *dear Doctor*, come to the Point, it is within five Minutes of Eleven, and my Aunt and I are going to see Mr. *What d'ye call em's* Paintings. — Give me therefore, in few Words, a good Account of this Thing, or give it up. — What say you ?

*Dr. Heartfree.* Why really, Madam, the *Scene* gives a good Account of itself. — Mr. *Riot's* Drunkenness, is an Appendix to his Wife's *Foibles*. — You must conceive him a fond Husband till undone by his Consort's Vanity, and then drinking to drown his own Cares, and, if possible, the Remembrance of her Faults. In this Situation where should you expect to find him, but in low Company; and after applying to so vile a Remedy, what could you expect better than this wild Discourse ? — As for poor *Snip the Taylor*, he is introduced for a Fool, talks like a Fool, and tells the Tale of a Fool; that he suspects his Wife, and has not the Courage to tell her his Suspicions. — It is indeed a Scene of *low Life*, but very well introduced, to shew the Malignancy of *Corruption*, and what an unaccountable *Contagion* there is in *Depravity of Manners*. — Had Mrs. *Riot* been a prudent  
Wo-

Woman, her Husband had been *sober*, and no more a Companion for Mr. *Snip* the *Taylor* than for his own *Footman*.

*Melissa* This does not thoroughly satisfy me, indeed, Doctor.— Mrs. *Riot* may be possessed with a Kind of Madness; the Passion of appearing a *fine Lady* may be little less in every Woman affected with it. But what has this to do with Mr. *Riot's* Drunkenness?— Or, at least, what has it to do with his being the Companion of his *Taylor*?— Because the giddy-brain'd Mrs. *Riot* will keep high Company, does it follow that her Husband must *besot* himself with *low*?

*Mr. Snipsnap*. Excellent, Madam! Excellent! the Logick of the Schools to your Reasoning is Nonsense.— Now, my learned Doctor, for your refined Criticism to prove to us, that because Madam *Riot* will *game* with none but *Dutchesses*; therefore, by necessary Consequence — her Spouse will *drink* with none but *Taylors*. — Demonstrate that, thou dear Admirer of *Bays* the younger.

*Dr. Heartfree* As a Man need never be ashamed to be *set right* by a Lady, so the good Sense of a Lady will always defend a Man from the Imputation of Incivility who sets *her* right, with that Submission that is always due to Beauty and to Authority. — Give me leave then to say.

*Mr.*



*Mr. Snipsnap.* [*Aside.*] Now the Devil take his Compliment,——any kind of Argument will do his Business. — His good Breeding has half convinced her already.

*Dr. Heartfree.* You will observe, Madam, that my Friend here, [*pointing to Snipsnap*] puts me upon proving too much, there is nothing of *necessary Consequence* in the Case; the Point is, Whether the Poet's Contrivance be *probable* or not? — The Temper of Husbands in general, are the *sweet*, the *firm*, and the *sullen*. Now, Mr. Riot's seems to be the first of these; his Tenderness for his Wife made him give Way to her Foibles, 'till they had gained the Dominion over her; then Remonstrances coming too late, he had endeavoured, since he could not *reclaim* his Spouse, to *console* himself. — He had Recourse to the *Lethe* of Mortals, *strong Liquors*. — *Snip's* was the same Case, he had met with the like Misfortune, and was inclined to the like Remedy. — Drunkenness, Madam, is an universal Leveller; for the Bottle, the Bed, and the Grave, bury all Distinctions. — For my Part therefore, I see nothing either absurd or unnatural in this *Scene*; and as for the Conversation, such as are proper Judges, which by the Way I take none of this Company to be, — allow that it is quite in Character; and that the same thing  
may

may be heard about *two* in the Morning at *Twenty* Coffee-houses in this Neighbourhood; and upon their Report in this Matter, (tho' in nothing else) I consent to rely.

*Lady Friendly.* I must confess I was at first of my Niece's Opinion; but I am now convinced the Author has Reason on his Side; and from what the Doctor has been saying, I am confirmed in what I have long thought, that Domestick Misfortunes as often arise through Female Mismanagement, as from want of Virtue or Honesty in the other Sex.—Not that I believe Men are without Faults.

*Sir F. Friendly.* Far from it, Madam, — Experience shews us, — *that Women have more Foibles, and Men more Vices.*—

*Dr. Heartfree.* That is an excellent *Maxim*, Sir *Francis*; and give me leave to add, that the *Manners* of an Age are influenced chiefly by the *Ladies*. If they are virtuous and wise, the Men must be so; for they will naturally desire to be agreeable to the fair Sex.—When Children, we derive our Principles from our Mothers; when in the Flower of our Age we either court the Esteem, or gratify the Humours of the Fair Ones with whom we converse; and when we enter into Family Engagements, we are prudent or profuse as the Temper of our Wives direct.—Thus, like absolute Monarchs,

narchs, we have only the *Title* to Domini-  
on, and are really the *Slaves* of those the  
World fancies we *command*.

*Melissa*. Very gallant Morality truly! —  
I shall think of it, Doctor, — and when-  
ever I have a Propensity to be a *fine Lady*,  
shall be checked by the Thoughts of mak-  
ing either a *Brute* or a *Sot* of my *Husband*.  
— An excellent *Memento* without *Questi-*  
*on!* Adieu Routs, Drums, and Card As-  
semblies.

*Mr. Snipsnap*. Admirable! — The La-  
dies, I see, are to be flattered *into* as well as  
*out* of their Senses. I remember a *Spanish*  
Proverb, *With the Fair and the Fierce a*  
*smooth Tongue is the best Weapon*.

*Melissa*. The Coach is at the Door, Aunt.  
— Good Morrow, Uncle. Gentlemen your  
Servant.

*Lady Friendly*. We shall be back by two;  
*Sir Francis*. — Gentlemen, Good Mor-  
row.

[*Exeunt Ladies*.]

*Sir F. Friendly*. Well, now the Ladies  
are gone, I have an Objection or two to  
propose, Doctor. — You must know, tho'  
I am very well satisfied with all that you  
advanced, and am persuaded that the La-  
dies will see *Letbe* the next Time with  
greater Pleasure, and with abundantly more

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Pro-

Profit; yet give me leave to ask, Whether this is a proper *Stage* Entertainment; and in what *Light* we ought to consider these *Dramatick Satires*?

*Mr. Snipnap.* Aye, *Dr. Heartfree*, let us hear that. Tragedies, Comedies, Operas, Tragi-Comedies, Pastorals, Masques, and Farces, with and without Musick, I have heard of.—But for these *Dramatick Satires*, whence came they? Did we borrow them from the *Greeks* or the *Romans*, from the *Italians*, the *French*, or the *Dutch*, Doctor?

*Dr. Heartfree.* Suppose they were our own Manufacture, would they be the worse for that? — But if we may guess from the Sentences that have been preserved to us by *Publius Syrus*, it appears that the *Romans* had something of the same kind. Be that however as it will, *Dramatick Satires* deserve to be approved and improved too, because they are a useful Kind of Writing. — When the witty *Mr. Congreve* apologized for his own Writings, in answer to *Mr. Collier's* Objections, the strongest thing he was able to say in Defence of modern Comedy, was, that, generally speaking, it closed with a moral Reflection in Verse, that that left a just and useful Impression upon the Mind. — Now if there be any Weight in this Argument, as I confess I think there is



is a great deal, then surely the *Dramatick Satire* is the best contrived Entertainment that can be ; for let the Play have been what it will, the *Audience* are sure to leave the *House* with something in their Heads worth remembering.

*Sir F. Friendly.* Why, I must own, that it is preferable to *Pantomimes* and *Dances*, which however they might please, could not possibly turn to the *Profit* of any but the *Performers*. — This certainly justifies your Friend as a *Manager*, because it plainly shews, that he meant the *publick Good* should go along with his *own*. — As to his extraordinary *Abilities* as an *Actor*, the several Parts he plays in this Piece are sufficient Testimonies.

*Mr. Snipsnap.* And of his *Vanity* too methinks. — Pray allow me that, *Doctor* ; for a Man to play *three* top Parts in the same *Farce*, and that *Farce* his *own*, — is, in my shallow Judgment, a little *extraordinary*, and not a little *fantastical*. — Under favour, *Doctor*, it was reserved for this Object of your Approbation.

*Dr. Heartfree.* It may be so, Sir. — But since you will have it *fantastical*, I am glad you allow it to be *extraordinary*. — Find me *one* that can play these *three* Parts as well, and I shall allow it to be *ridiculous*. — 'Till then, it is a Proof that he will spare *no Pains*

to please. — In this, I think, you and I agree.

*Mr. Snipsnap.* Agree ! dear Doctor, yes ; like the *Poles*, we agree to be as far asunder as possible. — You admire, and I despise his *Parts*. — As for his *Pains*, let him write like an *Ass*, and toil like a *Horse*, and that to the Day of Doom, he shall never please me. — You see how well we agree.

*Sir F. Friendly.* I have another Objection still, Doctor. — The Whole of this Performance is to me little more than *taking off*, — That's an Objection that does not lie against the *Toyshop*.

*Mr. Snipsnap.* That was in my Head too. — Why, when all comes to all, *Doctor*, this same *Dramatick Satire* is a downright *Auction*. — A sort of *Drury-Lane* Piracy upon the *Vagaries* of the *Hay-market*.

*Dr. Heartfree.* With Submission, Gentlemen, there never was an Objection more groundless. — Taking off *Persons* is a *Reflection*, but exposing vicious *Characters* is truly *Dramatick*. — I admire the *Toyshop*, as much as you do, *Sir Francis* ; it is a very moral and a very instructive Entertainment. — But I remember there was an *Objection* to that too.

*Sir F. Friendly.* Pray, Sir, what was the Objection?

*Dr.*

*Dr. Heartfree.* That it was *too serious*,—which I think does not at all affect *this*.—It has all the Life and Spirit of a *Farce*, and at the same Time the good Sense and Merit of a *Satire*; In short, it has that kind of Salt, that enhances the Merit of *Horace*.—The Author *makes his desperate Passes when he smiles*.

*Mr. Snipsnap.* This is past all bearing: *Horace* and little *David* upon a level.—Well, I thank you for that, Doctor.—If I can't ruin his Credit with you, I have at least the Satisfaction of knowing, — hat I can ruin yours with *all Mankind*.—*Quintus Horatius Flaccus*, after all Doctor *Bentley's* pains about him, no better a Writer than Squire *David* of *Drury-Lane*!—Farewel to Criticism.

*Sir Francis Friendly.* But, my Friend, you exaggerate. — The *Doctor* did not say, that they were *equal*, or even that they were *alike*; he only said, that his Favourite *David* resembled *Horace*.—And tho' no doubt he meant this as a Commendation, yet I dare say, he did not dream of a *Parallel*.

*Dr. Heartfree.* Not in the least, *Sir Francis*.—I have as little of the Flatterer about me as my Friend here.—I begin to think that we have no Chance for Reformation now but from the Stage; and therefore I am pleased with every thing that tends that way.—*Exhortation* has quite

quite lost its *Force*; but, thanks to Providence, *Ridicule* preserves its *Sting*.

Sir *Francis Friendly*. I have one thing more to offer, which, I must confess, stuck with me from the first Scene to the last, and I very much doubt, whether you will be able to remove it.—It is this, I cannot see why the Author has made Choice of *Æsop*, to entertain Mortals on the other Side of *Styx*.—In this too, I am the less satisfied, because we have *Mercury* at the Opening of the Piece; who seems to have been the proper Person to have entertained such Visitants.—The Ancients, if I remember right, recommended themselves when dying to *his* Care, because it was understood, that he conducted *Souls* to the Places of their respective Abode.

*Dr. Heartfree*. Very true, Sir *Francis*; and therefore it seems to me, that he would not have been the *proper* Person upon this Occasion.—These were not *Shades* to be conducted to their respective *Dwellings*, but *living* Persons, who by the Favour of *Proserpine* (an unusual Favour I must confess) were permitted to *pass* and *repass* *Styx*, upon a particular Occasion.—This, if I am not mistaken, is an allowable Distinction.

*Mr. Snipnap*. By your leave, Doctor, you have not answered, but evaded the Objection.—Why not *Mercury*? is one thing,  
but



but why *Æsop*? is another.—So you chose the easiest.—Very judicious, upon my Word.

*Dr. Heartfree.* If you had given me Time, I had come to the other.—It was reasonable upon such an Occasion, that the Orator should be a Person *generally known*, and *generally esteemed* by Mankind. If they were not acquainted with him upon first Sight, they would have been *at a Loss*; and if they knew him, without having a *Confidence* in him, the Knowledge would not have answered the *Writer's* Purpose.—Now in both Respects, I cannot recollect any fitter Person than *Æsop*; his Shape hindered any mistake; for what Man ever had a Form so distinguished? His Character was the most inviting, humane, beneficent, and remarkable for Easiness of Access.—Taking all these Qualities together, *Sir Francis*, the Author seems to be not very much in the Wrong.

*Mr. Snipsnap.* No, Sir, in the Wrong! This Author never is in the Wrong with you, nor any other Man in the Right. You compared him just now to *Horace*; have not you another fine Writer in your Eye, in order to burlesque him by a Comparison? —No celebrated *Greek* or *Roman* to Sacrifice?

*Dr.*

*Dr. Heartfree.* No indeed Sir. I only speak my Mind as you do.—And supposing you in the Right, as to my Prepossession in his Favour, your Prejudice is altogether as inexcusable.

*Sir F. Friendly.* Well, I give up this Objection, on the score of the Reasons you have assigned.—I have somewhat else to say, but it's of no great Importance,—and therefore let it pass.——

*Dr. Heartfree.* Nay, Sir *Francis*, that's unkind. I shall believe that you side with my Friend here, and look upon me as a partial Judge, instead of a disinterested Critick.—I protest to you, Gentlemen,—

*Mr. Snipsnap.* Have a Care, Sir! If you mean to gain Credit, you must say more.—Will you make *Oath* Sir?

*Sir F. Friendly.* Well, Doctor, what I was going to say was—the Songs do not charm me,—the *second* Stanza in the first, is not *over decent*; there is not much *point* in the second; and as for the *third*, I don't well see the Meaning of it.—Besides, *Æsop's* concluding Reflection directly contradicts it.

*Dr. Heartfree.* Now, Mr. *Snipsnap*, you and I are Friends; I give up all the Songs in a Lump, for the very Reasons that Sir *Francis* has assigned.—I could have wished the Entertainment had either been without them,

them, or that they had been *better*, for the sake of the Audience. — But I suppose they were necessary to the *Form* of the Entertainment, and to that *Matter* is too often sacrificed. — Now (*turning to Snipsnap*) am I not impartial? — And that too, even in your Opinion?

*Mr. Snipsnap.* I can't tell. — An Artifice perhaps, — in order to sanctify all you said before. But, to deal ingenuously with you, I laugh'd at the *first*, and was less displeased with the other *two*, than with any thing else. — So that you see, Doctor, you and I continue to *differ*, to the *End* of the *Chapter*.

*Sir F. Friendly.* But you have answered the Objection, much better than the Doctor could have done, if he had endeavoured it. — You have convinced me, there might be *some*, whom the Songs did not *displease*. — This shews it less an Absurdity than I imagined.

*Dr. Heartfree.* But does not *excuse* it, Sir *Francis*, the *first* more especially. There can be nothing right, that extorts a Blush. — *Congreve's* Wit, and *Vanbrugh's* Humour, cannot atone for *that*, — nor the *Custom* of the *Age*, — nor any Plea a *Poet* can invent.

*Mr. Snipsnap.* Why to you, Gentlemen, of *nice* *Morals*, it may be so. — But to

us who go to the *Play-house*, merely to be *diverted*, and to *kill* Time, we can easily pardon such Errors.—For my Part, to deal ingenuously with you, the *Devil to Pay*, or the *Virgin Unmask'd*, are to me worth all the *Dramatick Satires* in the World.—I laugh for an Hour, and think no more about them.

*Sir F. Friendly.* This being your *Humour*, I am thoroughly convinced, that you dispute without Acrimony, and contradict without ill nature.——Your Malice to the *Author* is only momentary; and before you get to *White's*, you will have forgot your *Dispute* with the *Doctor*.

*Mr. Snipsnap.* Highly probable indeed, *Sir Francis*.——And yet some Things have passed worth remembring.—I love Contradiction, it affords us *Exercise* while we sit still, and turns Conversation into a Game at *Tennis*.——But my Friend, (*turning to Doctor Heartfree*) answer me one Question seriously, and I shall be so much obliged to you, that I will remember that Answer, if not as long as I *live*, at least as long as I *can*.——Which, let me tell you, is an extraordinary Promise from me.

*Dr. Heartfree.* (*Bowing*) Mightily well Sir.—And pray what is this very serious Question?

*Mr.*



*Mr. Snipsnap.* Why, Sir, I would be glad to know, how a sensible Man, as you are, can expect to be believed, when you say, you expect a *Reformation* from the *Stage*? — Contend so very warmly for the good Sense and Morality of a little paltry *Entertainment*? — And seem to expect Lessons only of *Wisdom* and *Virtue* in a *Play-house*? — These, dear Sir, are to me Things *incomprehensible*; and all I beg to know is, — Whether you have not been as much in *Jest*, as your humble Servant?

*Sir F. Friendly.* Remember, Doctor, you are to answer him, not only seriously, but sincerely.

*Dr. Heartfree.* I will, Sir *Francis*. — I can assure you, Sir, (*turning to Snipsnap*) that I have spoke the very Sentiments of my Heart. I think Virtue, Beneficence and publick Spirit, the *Principles* upon which the *Happiness* of *Mankind* must be established, whether considered as Individuals or as Members of Society. — For the Propagation of these *Principles*, we must depend upon the *Pulpit*, the *Stage*, and the *Press*. — In this light, *theatrical* Entertainments are of the greatest Consequence. Every body knows, that the great End of *Tragedy* is to cleanse and purify the Passions, to shew us how they contribute to great and glorious Actions, when conducted by

right Principles, and become the Source of Crimes and Miseries, when they assume the Place of Principles, and Men only seek to gratify them at any Rate. — Hence *Poetical Justice* often becomes *essential* to a *Good Play*. — The Design of *Comedy* again, is to correct the *Follies* of Mankind, by shewing that a Departure from Truth and Rectitude, whether from Whim, from Humour, or from Constitution, is often *dangerous*, and always *ridiculous*. Hence the Obligation of the *comic Poet* to treat the *Manners* of Mankind as they are, and not to introduce Characters improper or fictitious. — The View of *Dramatick Satires* is to expose *Vice* authorized by *Custom*; and in this they differ both from *Tragedies* and *Comedies*; for they do not ascend so high as the former, nor are they calculated merely to chastise the Foibles that are the proper Subject of the latter. — In short, each of these Kinds of Theatrical Instruction combats a separate Adversary. — *Tragedy* shews the Blackness of *Vice*, *Comedy* exposes the Consequences of *Folly*, and *Dramatic Satires* are calculated to repress the *Tyranny* of *Fashion*. — You see, Sir, the Motives of my *Zeal*; and I leave you to judge, whether they have not some Foundation.

Mr. Snipsnap. As you have *stated* them, Sir, — I must allow that your *Motives* are  
very

very well founded.—But you will give me leave still to think, that the Number is not great of such as frequent the *Theatre* upon these Principles.—I dare say, if any Question was proposed between you and I in that House, how little Weight soever my Arguments have had here, I should be able to carry it there by a *vast Majority*.

*Sir F. Friendly.* That may possibly be, Sir; but as People do not always find what they seek, so it sometimes falls out that they find what they never sought; therefore with what *Intention* soever a Man comes to these *Entertainments*, Care should be taken, that what he meets with be *wholesome*.

*Mr. Snipsnap.* All this is very true, Sir *Francis*.—That ought to be the *Manager's* Care.—But then the young *Wrongheads* of our Time will have a *Care* of their own.—For if the Manager's Provisions are not *palatable*, as well as *wholesome*, they will turn up their Noses and not *care* to eat them.—In which Case *he* and his *Myrmidons* must *starve* literally, while theirs is only a metaphorical *Abstinence*.

*Dr. Heartfree.* Notwithstanding I have insisted so much upon the *useful*, it was ever far from my Intention to exclude the *pleasant*. I know very well, that *preaching* is not the Business of the *Theatre*, nor *moralizing* directly.—Something of *this* there must

must be, but the *less* of it the *better*.—Instruction of this kind is to be convey'd imperceptibly, and ought to arise rather from the *good Sense* of the *Audience*, than from the *direct* Application of the *Author* through the Mouth of the *Actor*.—Nor is this so difficult as may be imagined; *Truth* like *Light* reveals itself without any Assistance, and if Characters are *well marked*, they will *strike* the Mind *right*, and the *Moral* will be convey'd in the *Representation*.—I readily grant you, that the *Multitude* frequent the *Play-house* with a View of being *pleased* rather than *reformed*; neither does any Inconvenience arise from hence, but quite the contrary.—If the Performance be good in its kind, it will leave an *Impression*; and those who were *pleased* with the *Representation*, must, whether they will or not, be *instructed* by the *Remembrance*.

*Sir F. Friendly.* Very true, *Doctor*.—This shews of what Consequence it is to support a *right Taste*.—For if the *Few* will but exert themselves in defending *good Plays* and condemning *bad*, the *Many* will follow their *Examples*, without considering the *Reason*.—And thus the Dignity and Usefulness of the *Stage* will be preserved, even by the *Suffrage* of those who have very little Conception of its *Honour* or its *Utility*.

*Mr.*



*Mr. Snipsnap.* Very plausible truly.—Then you are of Opinion the *Men of Pleasure* are *Dupes* to the *Men of Sense*; now that I never thought in my Life;—and I'll lay you *fifty* Guineas to *five*, that put it to the Trial, we carry the *gallant* Comedy against the *grave*, in spite of all the Power of the *Criticks*.

*Dr. Heartfree.* There you are quite mistaken, Friend.—*Men of Pleasure* will as little approve of *bad* Plays as *Men of Sense*.—The only Difference lies here; *Men of Sense* know why they are *pleased*, and *Men of Pleasure*, provided they are pleased, enquire *no farther*.

*Sir F. Friendly.* That is precisely the Case, *Mr. Snipsnap*.—In what passes upon the great *Stage* of the *World* we are all *Actors*, and a Man naturally *resents* the questioning his *Behaviour*. But upon the *Stage* at *Drury-Lane*, we consider others as *Actors*, and ourselves only as *Spectators*; and tho' the *Tables* are very often turned, and the *Players* in Reality act *our* Parts, yet from the Persuasion of being disinterested, we decide as if we were really so, and approve that *Ridicule*, which, for the *present*, does not hurt us.

*Mr. Snipsnap.* Upon the whole, I believe there is a great deal of *Truth*, Gentlemen, in what you say.—For now I think  
of

of it, I have read abundance of *loose* Plays that are *never* acted.—Some of *Shadwell's* and *Durfey's* no-body would bear; and I begin to suspect the Reason is, that their *Pleasantry* is unaccompanied with *Meaning*. So that *Taste* it seems supplies the Place of *Principle*, and to avoid being *stupid* one must preserve a *Regard* for *Morals*.

*Dr. Heartfree.* Your Conclusion, Sir, is very natural and very just.—The Mind of Man is so contrived, that independent of the *Bias* of his *Passions*, *Truth* and *Rectitude* will always please.—This was very early discovered, upon this Foundation stands the *Merit* of the *Ancients*.—This gave *Excellence* to their Works, which have stood the *Test* of *Ages*.—Had it been otherwise, they had been long decried;—whereas we are sensible, that in all succeeding Ages, in *Proportion* to the *Extent* of *Knowledge*, and *Nicety* of *Judgment*, they have been more or less *esteemed*.

*Sir F. Friendly.* Give me leave also to observe, that upon the *first* Cultivation of *Arts* in every Nation, Authors have, generally speaking, worked upon their *own* Stock, and have exhibited Pieces fuller of *Imperfections* than of *Beauties*—But by Degrees, as Experience discovered wherein *Excellence* consisted, all have recurred either to the *Ancients* themselves, or to the very *Rules* by which

which they were guided.—This manifestly shews, that *Right* and *Wrong*, *Deformity* and *Beauty*, *Excellence* and *Imperfection*, depend not upon the *Opinion* of Men, but upon the *Qualities* of *Things*.—Otherwise this could never have happened in all polite Nations. —Rest satisfied therefore, Mr. *Snipsnap*, that *Taste* is no trifling Thing, and that while we retain it, in spite of the *Corruption* of the *Age*, *Knaves* will be abhorred, and *Fools* appear ridiculous.

Mr. *Snipsnap*. Upon the *Stage*, Sir *Francis*, I believe they may.

Sir F. *Friendly*. And while on the *Stage*, every *where* else.—In other Places a thousand Circumstances may concur to oblige Men to *conceal*, or even to *dissemble* their Sentiments.—But, Sir, every Man has a *Stage* in his *Breast*, and tho' he does not laugh out, yet he laughs heartily within, at *Knaves* and *Fools* of every Species.

Dr. *Heartfree*. It gives me very great Satisfaction, that setting out so *wide* of each other at first, my Friend and I should come in *together* at the Close.—I shall have the better Opinion for the future of the Lovers of *Contradiction*, and shall not apprehend it a *Sign* either of *ill Nature* or *Obstinacy*. — Disputes without Animosities on either side, end in finding the *Truth*, which is what both Parties seek, tho' in a different way.

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*Mr. Snipsnap.* That has been always my Sentiment; and I freely own, that I am never better pleased than when I meet with a Man of Parts and Knowledge who is *tenacious* of his *Opinions*. For then, by *thwarting* him a little I put him upon his *Mettle*, and get out of him in *half* an *Hour* more than I could have acquir'd myself in *half* a *Year*. But let us see how the Day goes, [*looks upon his Watch*] I vow almost *Twelve*. Two Hours have run away in our talking over this *Entertainment*. Sure we might have spent our Time better.

*Sir F. Friendly.* Very possibly we might. — But I think it is at least an even Chance, that we might have spent it worse. I must own I never think Time *thrown away* in Conversation upon any *useful* Subject, when it is treated with *Life* and *Spirit*, and at the same Time with *good Sense* and *good Manners*. What say you, *Doctor*, I flatter myself you will concur in my Opinion?

*Dr. Heartfree.* Most sincerely. — I join likewise with my Friend here, and am firmly persuaded, that if most of the *common Topics* of *Discourse* were handled with the same innocent Freedom and honest Intention that has been shewn upon this Occasion, they would be *better understood*. And after all, what concerns us *more* than to gain a thorough



thorough Insight into *Human Nature* ?——  
The common *Chit Chat* at the *Coffee-house* of  
the Weather, the News, the little *private*  
*Scandal* of the *Town*, and such like, is a  
real Waste of *Time* and of *Words*.

*Mr. Snipsnap*. As a Proof of which give  
me leave to observe, that it makes *no Im-*  
*pression* upon the Memory.—I have often re-  
marked, that upon being asked at Dinner  
what I have *heard* in the Morning, I have  
often been at a Loss to *recollect* any thing  
of the Matter; and when with some  
Trouble this has been *effected*, I have found  
it of so little Consequence that I was *asham-*  
*ed* to *repeat* it; whereas many Things I  
have heard this Morning will stick with me  
*a long Time*, and furnish a rational Amuse-  
ment when I take a solitary *Walk* in the *Park*.

*Sir F. Friendly*. The Doctor and I are  
much obliged to you.—But now you talk of  
Walking, *Mr. Snipsnap*, I should be glad to  
take a *Turn* with you; and if you are not  
otherwise engaged, Gentlemen, you would  
do me a particular Favour, if you would  
return hither and take a *Family Dinner*. —  
What say you, the Ladies will be back by  
Two?

*Mr. Snipsnap*. I am entirely at your Ser-  
vice, *Sir Francis*, and think the Obligation  
wholly on my Side.—I hope, *Doctor*, we  
shall

shall have your Company. — Tho' I am afraid we shan't *dispute* again in haste.

*Dr. Heartfree.* I have a little Business to dispatch, which will hinder my attending you to the *Park*, but you may depend upon me at *Two*, or a Quarter after. —

As to *Disputes*, my good Friend, you and I can hardly avoid them. — We are naturally warm, and tho' we should resolve to keep clear of them as much as possible, our Tempers would not suffer the *Agreement* to be of any long *Duration*.

*Mr. Snipsnap.* Nay, if that is your Resolution — *Contradiction* is the Word — and *Wrangling* will ensue.

*Dr. Heartfree.* Adieu, Gentlemen, till Dinner.

*Sir F. Friendly* and *Mr. Snipsnap.* Adieu, dear *Doctor*, adieu.

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

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